



Principals Report 2017

In further support of Greg's acknowledgement, of the Darug and Gundungurra people, we pay our respects to elders past and present, and welcome all aboriginal people within our School community.

Last year we celebrated our 40th Year as an independent, secular, coeducational, Human-centred School. It was lovely to welcome back teachers from our past, including Bob Tucker, Pam Tucker, Catherine Dignam, Lesley Christen, David Wansborough, Graham Archer, Barbara Weisflogg, as well as many parents and students from our past and present. For many alumni it was their first foray to our Hazelbrook site, and comments were abundant about the similarities in ambience and beauty to our Leura home of 30 years.

As part of our celebrations we enjoyed an 'Impressions' conversation at Korowal with Hugh Mackay on the place of community and the importance of belonging. Hugh discussed how, as humans, it is in our DNA to be connected beings. This sentiment was evident as we gathered on our beautiful grounds to share stories of our forty-year history and give thanks to the people who have made Korowal a reality.

While 2017 delivered celebrations, we also experienced tragedies, and the capacity of our community was challenged by these events. Within a two-month period, from November to New Year's Day, we were rocked by the news that John Shaw, our dear contractor and constructor, David Gliddon, an intrepid adventurer, former student and father of young twins, and Lachlan Foote, a very recent graduate and gentle soul, had passed away after freak accidents in the Mountains. Again, we were humbled by the amplitude of our connections. The drive and generosity of our staff, parents, students and alumni to unite in support of the families and each other is a tribute to the community of generations of Korowallians and the importance of belonging. As we move into 2018 we continue to hold the families and loved ones of our dearly departed in our hearts.

Taking our School further into the global community has been a continuing focus in 2017. We welcomed students and teachers from our sister schools in Japan and China, and our students visited Japan and our Nepalese sister school. We welcomed a delegation of 22 Principals from China. I was honoured to be invited to give a keynote at the Sinofield Educational Forum at the Fairmont, and to also speak at the AIS- Hangzhou Principals Forum. We continue to develop greater global links to provide rich cultural experiences for our students and to share our school and creative ways.

Other highlights of our year include refinement in teaching praxis, with a focus on professional development for staff and improvements to learning facilities and our outdoor spaces. The Learning Resource Centre was refitted to provide standing benches. We repeated a similar fitting in the senior common room so that students have healthy options and may choose to work standing or sitting. With the assistance of a Commonwealth Building Grant, work commenced to provide under cover parking and toileting facilities for all-ability access, as well as covered access pathways. This continues into 2018.

We also had quite a few staff changes. After 25 years at Korowal Joachim Herrmann retired from full time teaching. Joachim was at the forefront of ICT developments in the schools. He extracted us from pen and paper, to our first computers and through all the technological changes that led to our current Bring Your Own Device system. We enjoy seeing him when he returns for the occasional relief teaching day.

Kirsty Bishop also moved from her position as school Counsellor at Korowal and into private practice. Kirsty was one of our first senior students at Korowal, and returned as a staff member after study and practice. For ten years we benefited from her warmth, compassion, insight and intelligence. She has graduated twice!

Amanda Bartels resigned after ten years in Korowal Primary. Students and staff continue to speak fondly of Amanda's caring and quiet ways. She provided excellent learning experiences for her primary classes and introduced fine project-based learning in her Year 5 and 6 classes.

Then at the end of the year we said farewell to Liz Barclay as High School Coordinator and Deputy Principal. In her short time with us Liz assisted us to refine many of our systems in the high school, including reporting and assemblies, and was a great advocate for student wellbeing.

We are most grateful for having these fine staff members with us for so long. Their legacies are seen in the students and programs we continue to use. We thank them all and wish them the best in their future endeavours.

It is always a challenge to find the right fit for a small school, but thankfully we have welcomed wonderfully talented and compassionate people onto our staff for 2017-2018.

Jason Carthew is now in the role of IT Coordinator and Multi-Media teacher, amongst other things. Jason comes with pedigree, as he engages in NESA staff training, programming, HSC marking and curriculum development, as well as teaching. We have introduced a new subject to HSC- Multi-Media Studies, which is Jason's passion.

Similarly, we welcomed Sarah Farrell-Whelan as our Wellbeing Officer. Sarah is a senior social worker with a depth of experience in working with child, youth, and family mental health. She is also an ex-student, and is currently engaged in Open Dialogue Training with Sydney University, St Vincents Hospital and trainers from Finland.

Ian Curtois joined our staff to teach Biology to our senior students in 2018 and the students are in awe of his knowledge and eagerness to share this, and to facilitate their learning.

With great relief we welcomed Jes Somerville to the new part-time role of Personal Assistance to the Principal and have not looked back. She is perfect for the role.

Finally we welcomed Alistair Symons to the role of High School Coordinator, Deputy Principal. Alistair has a background in teaching and school leadership, tertiary teaching, school compliance, and is completing his doctorate. He has settled into this position with ease. We also have with us two new primary teachers, Clare Laws and Elise Alt, who commenced in 2018, so our compliment is complete with a passionate team for 2018.

Throughout the year the Korowal School Council has again been a great support to myself and the executive team. The individual Directors, Greg Lucas, Chris Lee, Jayne Ansin, Steve Garthwin, Louise Dugate and Nathan McLellan, have been invaluable in their governance. As these are voluntary positions we express our appreciation to each on behalf of the staff, parents and alumni. Of particular recognition, Greg has spent many weeks of his time reviewing and refining business as Board Chair, and does so with clarity and sound ethical considerations. We are fortunate to have his level of commitment and scrutiny. Jayne has also shared time and skills in staff reviews and employment matters.

Our teaching, administration, support and finance staff, are the silk that weaves us all together. We have had guidance, laughter and great work from each individual. We are beholden to you all for your passion, goodwill, tenacity, rigour and intelligence. Special thanks are extended to Bec Finch for her contributions to the executive team and leading the primary school and to Melanie Williams for her sound financial management.

Our students and their families are the reason that Korowal exists. We enjoy conversations, exchange ideas, facilitate learning and appreciate our students personal and academic achievements. Parents and

carers offering their help in a voluntary capacity has assisted us to further great ideas, as have our partnerships with external practitioners.

We faced challenges together, we embraced change and celebrated our achievements. There is much to be proud of as we map the course of our future and reflect on the year that has been.
Thank you everyone.

Barb